THE BRITISH EMPIRE

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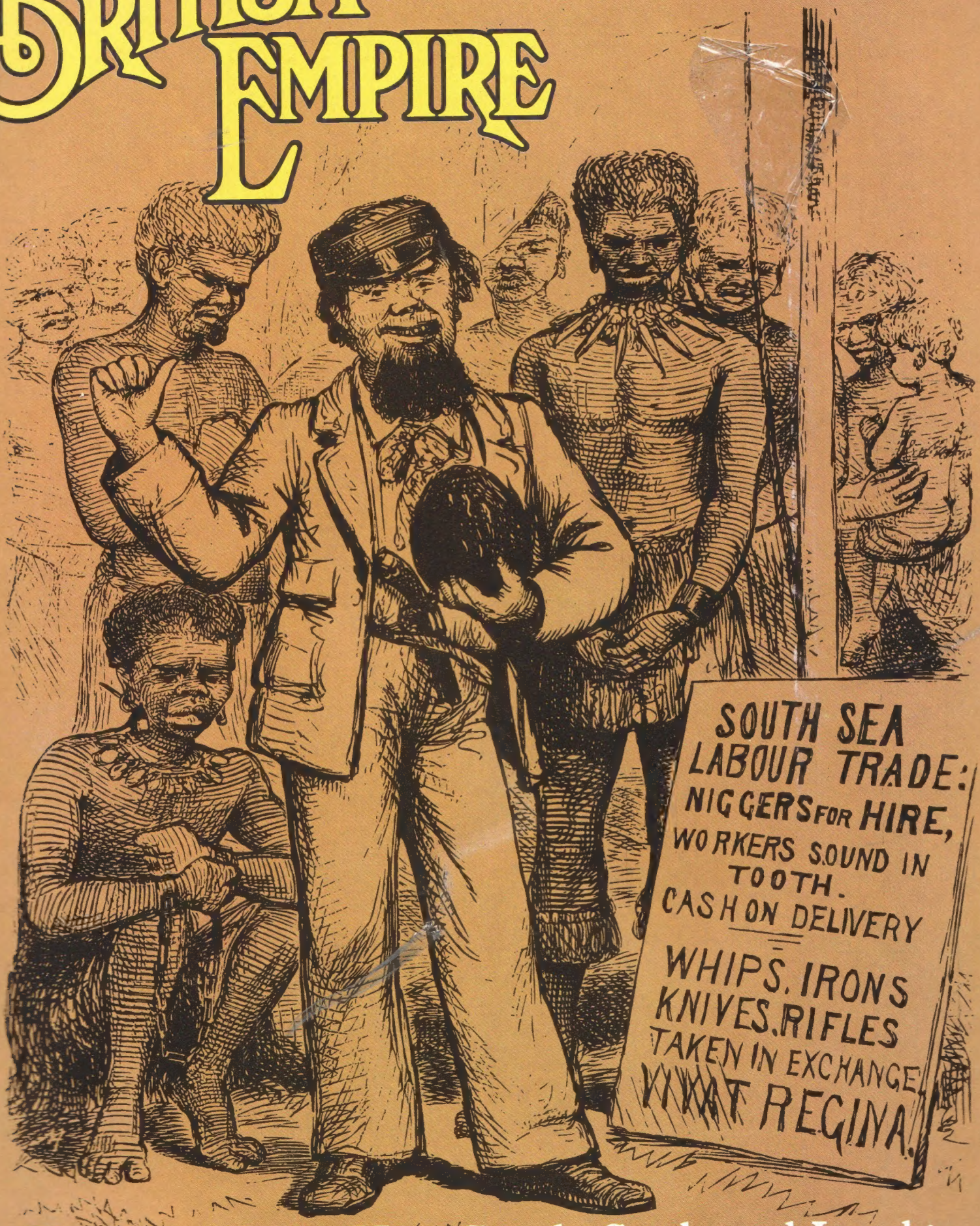

The Struggle for Men, Goods, Souls and Land in

BRITAIN'S PACIFIC ISLANDS

Australia & New Zealand 70c South Africa 70c Canada 95c

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Deputy Editor Christopher Farman
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Sales Director George Gillespie
Consultants D.K.Fieldhouse, Lecturer in Commonwealth History and Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford
A.F.Madden, Reader in Commonwealth Government and Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford

TREVOR REESE, who wrote the main text of this issue, received his doctorate in history from the University of Leeds. He was a university lecturer in Australia for six years and is now Reader in History at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London. His books include *Colonial Georgia*, *Australia in the Twentieth Century* and *The History of the Royal Commonwealth Society*.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: (*t*=top; *b*=bottom; *l*=left; *r*=right). Cover and 2332*t*: National Library of Australia, Canberra. Inside back cover: Trustees of the British Museum. Trustees of the British Museum 2325; Camera Press 2352; Foreign and Commonwealth Office Library 2338–45; P.N.Lawrence Collection 2334; London Missionary Society 2326/7, 2335, 2348/9*b*; National Library of Australia, Canberra 2331*t*, 2332/3, 2336/7; Radio Times Hulton Picture Library 2331*b*, 2348*l*, 2348/9*t*, 2349*tr*, 2349*br*, 2351; Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand 2328, 2330, 2347, 2350. PHOTOGRAPHERS: R.B.Fleming & Co. 2325; Eileen Tweedy 2326/7, 2334, 2335, 2338–45, 2348/9*b*; Rob Wright 2352.

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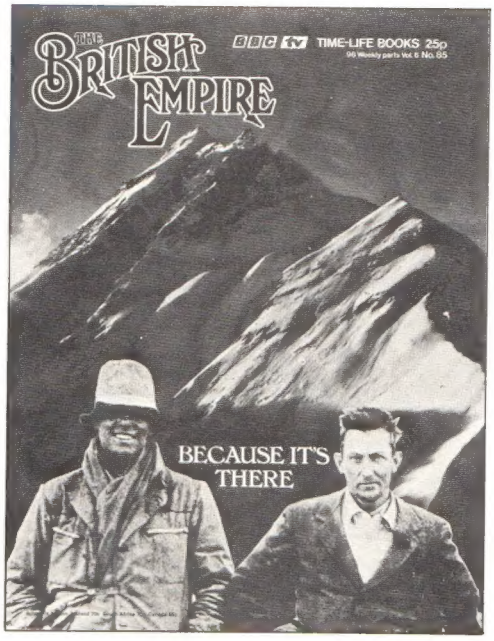
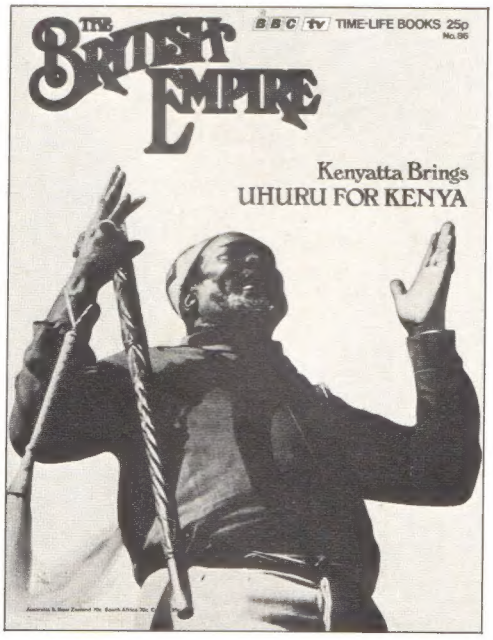
Published by Time-Life International (Nederland) B.V. in co-operation with the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Distributed in the U.K. by Time-Life International Ltd. and BBC Publications.

Printed in England by Jarrold and Sons Ltd. Norwich.





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Cover: An Australian cartoon of the 1880s evokes the brutality that underlay the grisly trade in Pacific Island native labourers ("blackbirds").

BRITAIN'S PACIFIC ISLANDS

When Britain began to explore the South Pacific in the 17th Century, she had little interest in the islands dotting that vast and little-known sweep of ocean (shown below in an early French map). She was seeking continental land. But after Captain Cook claimed both Australia and New Zealand in 1770, Britain was forced despite herself into involvement with outlying areas. The Pacific islands became successively sources for food for Australia's penal colonies, happy hunting-grounds for traders and missionaries and pawns on the chequerboard of international diplomacy before, in the 1960s and 1970s, they began to emerge as miniature island-nations ✱

By Trevor Reese

The British first arrived in the vast sweep of the South Pacific and its scattered coral-and-palm islands when Captain James Cook explored the region in the 1770s. His purpose was to establish a British presence in any continent-sized land masses he found, not to build an island empire for Britain. He claimed Australia and New Zealand and on this foundation the British spread outwards, to the Pacific isles.

New South Wales – the site of the first Australian penal colony – was supposedly barren. The fertile isles described by Cook would, it was thought, provide food, materials for industry and women – fundamental requisites which a colony needed to survive and flourish. The colonists flourished indeed, and imperial interest in the Pacific islands increased steadily thereafter. Motives were many – strategy, geographical knowledge, ruthless exploitation, missionary zeal, romantic dreams: all these were to play a part in bringing remote Pacific areas into the orbit, first of Britain, then of the new nations, Australia and New Zealand.

Early Western knowledge of the South Pacific grew out of the search for *Terra Australis Incognita*, the Unknown Land of the South. Geographers from classical times on had believed that a gigantic continent rivalling the size of Europe and Asia existed in the Southern Hemisphere – a huge prize for the nation that first discovered it. The first expedition to set out deliberately to find *Terra Australis* left Peru in 1567 in two ships under the command of Alvara de Mendana and Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa.

They missed all the Polynesian islands but came upon a large group – Isabella, Guadalcanal, Malaita and San Christoval – which they decided were the Land of Ophir, the Biblical source of King Solomon's wealth; so they named them the Solomon Islands. But it was the fabled continent they were really seeking. Mendana explored for several months, but when his starving crews became rotten with scurvy, he gave up and beat back across the Pacific.

He was convinced that the great continent lay just beyond the Solomon Islands. But his chief pilot had placed the islands on his map over 1,000 miles short of their true position. When Mendana returned to the South Pacific 28 years after his first voyage, not only did the dreamed-of continent still elude him, but he couldn't even find the very islands he had discovered in the first place. It was nearly two centuries before they were again identified and this time properly charted.

Other explorers, also mystified and magnetized by the South Seas, were busy in the meantime. Mendana's pilot, Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, a Portuguese, had a go himself in 1606. Taking a more southerly direction than had his skipper, he came upon the New Hebrides, concluded that the land must be the looked-for continent, and ceremoniously took possession of the entire region as far south as the Pole, naming it Australia del Espiritu Santo. The name survives in one of the islands today.

A few decades later, the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, Anthony Van Diemen, promoted an expedition under the command of Abel Janszoon Tasman, whom he charged with no less a task than searching for all that remained unknown in that part of the terrestrial globe. In November, 1642, his expedition, which had set out from Batavia, discovered the west coast of the great island that lies south of Australia, now called Tasmania; then it went on to sail up the west coast of New Zealand and make its way back to the Dutch East

Indies via the Friendly Islands and Fiji.

After Tasman, exploration of the South Pacific languished for a time. The most thrusting nations were more concerned to consolidate what they already held. But the mysteries of Oceania continued to grip man's imagination.

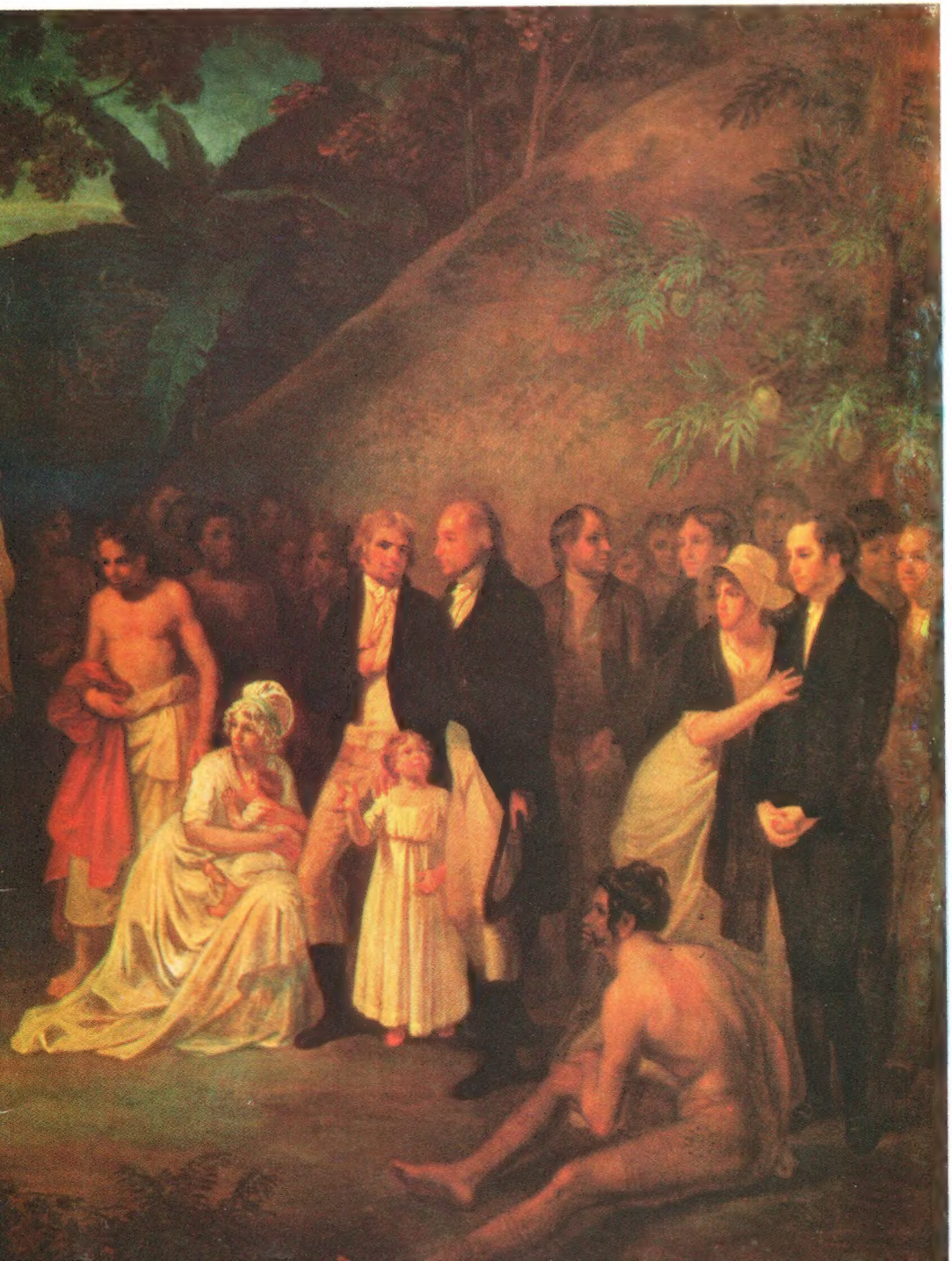
In 1697, a dramatic account of Pacific exploration rekindled active interest in the area. The account, *New Voyage Around the World*, was written by the buccaneer William Dampier. His book won him the respect of the government minister responsible for trade and plantations and the attention of Admiralty officials. As persuasive as he was daring, he convinced them of the value of a voyage to "the remoter part of the East Indies and the neighbouring coast of Terra Australis."

In 1699, they sent him off on the first exploring expedition ever to be organized and equipped by the Admiralty. But their lordships' enthusiasm must have been somewhat restrained, for the vessel of which they gave him command, H.M.S. *Roebuck*, was a rotting old hulk, and her crew, press-ganged for the voyage, were inexperienced and refractory.

Against these odds, Dampier rounded the Cape of Good Hope and crossed the Indian Ocean to touch the western shore of Australia. He then sailed northward by way of Timor, round the western and along the northern coast of New Guinea, to discover and christen New Britain, the largest island in the group which became known, after the Germans acquired it in the 19th Century, as the Bismarck Archipelago. The old *Roebuck*, her creaking timbers slimy with weeds and encrusted with barnacles, breasted contrary winds to cross the Pacific, rounded the Cape of Good Hope again, and, having almost encircled the globe, sprang a leak as she limped towards Ascension Island in the South Atlantic. All hands clambered safely ashore, but the *Roebuck* was a write-off. Dampier compiled a brilliant account of what he had seen of Australia which stimulated new interest in the nature and potential of all the lands in the South Pacific.

After Britain had defeated France in the struggle for colonial supremacy in America, India and the West Indies, both nations turned vigorously to Oceania. France dispatched expeditions under Louis Antoine de Bougainville, whose name was given to that most symbolic of all tropical blossoms, Bougainvillaea; and England sent John Byron, Samuel Wallis, Philip Carteret and, of course, Captain James Cook. In three voyages between 1768 and 1779, Cook destroyed, once and for all, the time-honoured myth of the unknown southern continent and produced an astonishingly accurate map of a Pacific Ocean in which only a few Polynesian islands still remained undiscovered. He revealed the true shape of New Zealand, found and charted the east coast of Australia, and opened the way for effective imperial and commercial enterprise by Britain in the South Seas.

By the time the penal colony in New South Wales was founded, Britain was pre-eminent in the islands by virtue of discovery. The first Governor, Captain Arthur Phillip, was given a vague legal jurisdiction – but not sovereignty – over "all the islands adjacent in the Pacific Ocean" which lay between 10° 37′ south and 43° 39′ south: a swathe from New Guinea down to New Zealand, and stretching indefinitely eastwards. Tahiti, the Cook Islands, Fiji and Samoa were assumed to fall within these terms of reference. Later a British statute empowered the supreme courts of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania) to try British subjects who committed offences in the vast area.



Matavai, part of Tahiti, is ceded by the island's King and Queen (seated on their bearer's shoulders) to the first missionaries to visit the island in 1797.

Justices of the peace were appointed in some of the islands, and by the middle of the 19th Century consuls were sent to Fiji and Samoa.

Maintaining law and meting out justice were difficult, for the islands teemed with castaways and runaway prisoners – not only British, but American and European, as well. There were frequent bloody tangles both between white and native and between white and rival white. And traders relied on violence and brutality to force the islanders to do business. In Fiji, according to an early report, a number of convicts who had fled New South Wales turned mercenary, reaching agreements with local chiefs who "allowed them whatever they chose to demand, receiving in return their aid in carrying on war."

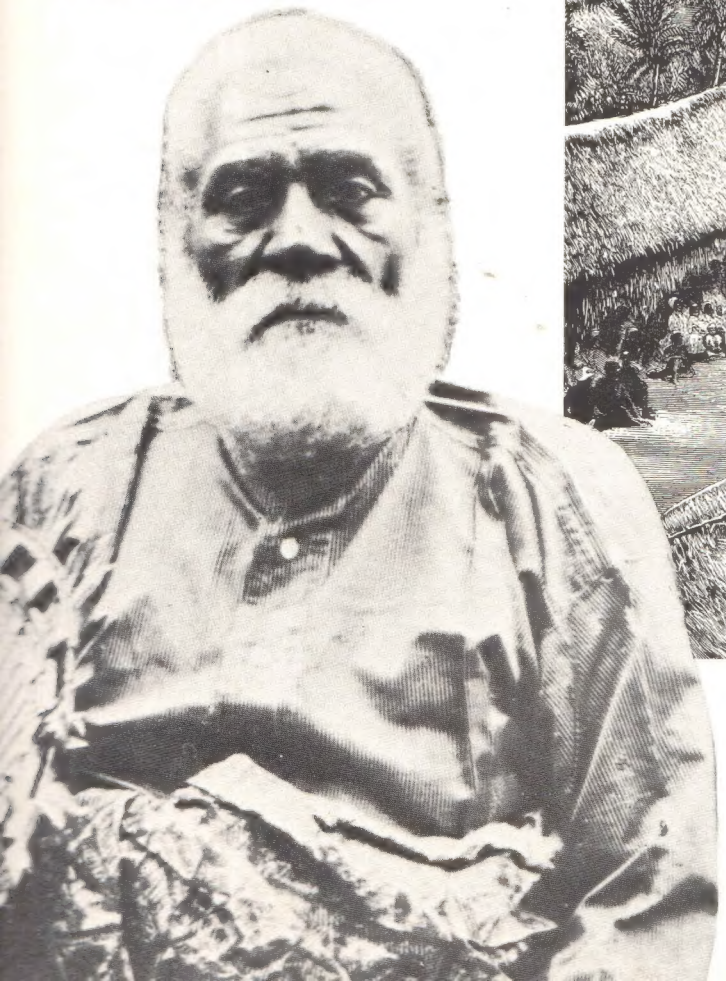
The first consuls concentrated as much on curbing the widespread drunkenness among the Europeans as they did on quelling the violent crime that went on under their noses. Commanders of British warships sometimes gave them a hand in maintaining order and respect for property: the sight of a war sloop or two in the harbour acted as a powerful restraint on bellicose chiefs.

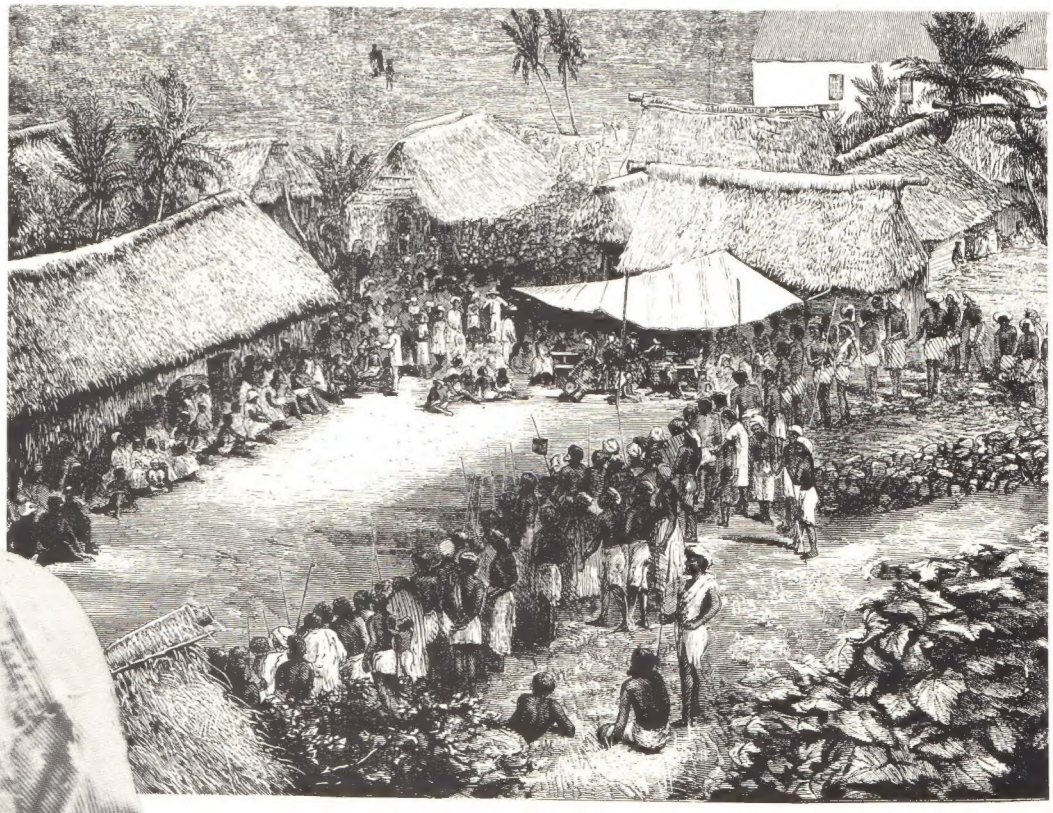
A naval presence also helped create an atmosphere conducive to the work of the Christian missions. The London Missionary Society had begun operations in Tahiti as early as 1797 with the twofold aim of evangelizing and of creating a new social order. Soon other societies, too, became involved in the far-flung island. Eventually, they allied with the merchants in shipping pork and coconut oil from Tahiti; pearl shell from the Tuamotas (a coral archipelago east of Tahiti) and the Cook Islands, and sandalwood from the Marquesas further to the north. The missionaries have been both praised and censured for their role, but on balance their influence was far more beneficial than harmful, and their personal restraint and decorum contrasted favourably with the cruelty and lawlessness so flagrant among other Europeans.

They were, however, undeniably priggish in their determination to impose the most strait-laced of Western moral values upon peoples racially and culturally a world apart. To the missionaries, dancing, nudity, sexual laxity, polygamy and intemperance were akin to satanism. And such ritual practices as cannibalism and the strangling of widows were, of course, anathema.

Widow-strangling was perhaps the strangest among many strange rites. The islanders believed that the women would be happier in the afterlife *with* their husbands than on earth *without* them. A sandalwood trader, William Lockerby, described a widow-strangling he witnessed in Fiji in 1808: "I saw her sitting upon the ground. She was about fifty years of age, painted all over with turmerick root and cocoa-nut oil. Round her were sitting about a hundred women. . . . Although at times they made a great noise and appeared to be much afflicted, yet at other times they would laugh. . . . The men were employed in digging a grave, or rather a round pit, about three feet deep. In a house close by was the body of a dead man, the poor woman's husband, which was painted entirely black except the head, and it was red. Wishing to save the woman's life I offered the King a number of whale's teeth, beads, &c. . . . The old chief told me if she was not put to death her husband's relations . . . would attack and destroy him. . . . The man's dead body was soon

The influential Fiji chieftain, Cakobau (below), was converted by Wesleyan missionaries in 1854. Thereafter, it became relatively easy to convene large missionary meetings, like the one on the right.





after brought out and bundled into the grave. . . . A mat was then laid at the edge of the grave, on which the woman was placed, with her feet upon the dead body. . . . The other women now brought some calabashes of oil . . . she rubbed some . . . on her body. She did not appear the least uneasy. . . . A piece of . . . cloth twisted like the strand of a rope was then put round her neck. . . . One man at each end of this rope pulled it tight, while another kept her eyes closed, and a woman held her feet together. Her hands were loose. She did not make the least resistance. . . . [They] drew the cord so very tight that they almost separated the head from the body. The corpse was then put into the grave, and covered with mats, over which they placed earth and stones."

To uproot such customs took tact, understanding and, above all, patience. The missionaries, both men and women, sailed from England in the early days aboard convict ships. They went heavy laden with instructions, starting with the duty to pay "benevolent attention" during the voyage to their "unhappy Countrymen." Once arrived, they were "on no account" to be "partakers in [native] idolatries." On the other hand, they were not to violate "customs which [the natives] hold most sacred." They were to "avoid to the utmost every temptation of the Native Women" and to "cultivate the tenderest Compassion for the wretched conditions of the Heathen while you see them led Captive of Satan."

Furnished with barter-goods for essentials, they infuriated wily professional traders by dealing generously with the islanders. But their original stocks soon ran out, often through native pilfering, and many were left for long periods, as the first Tahiti mission complained to a ship's captain after five years, "without a letter or intelligence from England." They "had suffered many privations, their stock of clothing was very low, no shoes to put on their feet, but were obliged to walk bare footed along the rough roads or coral rock."

Their health deteriorated wretchedly. In 1804, at the end of the same five years, the Tahitian missionaries recorded: "Sister Eyre had been for many months, afflicted with an intermittent flux that brings her very low; sister Henry (tho' also often afflicted) is pretty well and so are the children, sister Shelley is near the time of her confinement, her son is in good health, br. Wilson (who had been ill) is almost recovered; br. Jefferson has been for two years in an infirm state of health, thro' a cold he caught when travelling round the island, the rest of the brethren enjoying tolerable health."

The problems confronting the missionaries were immense. They had to learn local languages and translate the Scriptures into them. They had to train teachers and prepare and print suitable textbooks. Explorers, as well as disseminators of the Good Word, they ventured as a matter of course into unknown and dangerous terrain to plant their stations among people whose welcome might range from mildly hostile to wildly ferocious – even cannibalistic.

The missions had close links with the Australian and New Zealand colonies, and their activities helped to stimulate Australian and New Zealand involvement in the Pacific islands during the 19th Century. The pastoral authority of the first Bishop of New Zealand, George Augustus Selwyn, was deemed in 1841 to extend over much of Melanesia, a group of islands widely scattered between Fiji and New Guinea. Selwyn, a hearty, athletic cleric who handled sailing-ships and swam the roughest rivers, visited the islands 12 times. Combining energy with inspiration, he managed to get a number of schools started and in 1849, founded the Melanesian Mission which set up a headquarters at Norfolk Island.

The missionaries learnt through bitter trial and error that the surest way to get the gospel accepted was to win the confidence and co-operation of the person who not only claimed to be king, but whose society accepted him as such. It was by no means always a straightforward matter of royal descent. The king or chief – as priest, as well as ruler – had to prove, if he wanted to keep his job, that the gods were on his side by winning battles and providing fertile harvests. It was also helpful if he and his family married into other influential families.

The ever-harassed Tahitian missionaries made friends, when they settled in Matavai on the northern coast, with King Pomare I, whom they assumed to be the ruler of the entire island. But they soon discovered that his power extended over only a limited area, and that even this was challenged by other clans. Furthermore, his son, Pomare II, led a rebellion against him.

The missionaries infuriated young Pomare by preventing him from bartering local produce for muskets and gunpowder with an American vessel, *Nautilus*. A deputation they sent to Pomare I were stripped and beaten. As the battles hotted up, the missionaries were caught in the cross-fire. They had started out 23 strong. Now 11 of them decided it was the better part of wisdom to sail for Australia aboard the *Nautilus*.

Pomare I eventually acknowledged his son's victory, but the new ruler had no love for the missionaries. Three more left; and the few who stood firm were forced to win his friendship, despite their moral scruples against fire-arms, by occasionally buying weapons for him from passing ships. Father and son were ultimately reconciled, but they were constantly challenged by other factions. It was clear to the missionaries that neither had genuine sovereignty.

All any evangelist could do was to make peace with the man who held political power at the moment. This could mean depending on a chieftain whose devotion to Christianity was flimsy at best and whose conduct might be difficult to condone in Christian terms; but if he could be publicly converted, it was a vital first step in converting his followers. Among the most important of such conversions was that of Cakobau, the Vunivalu of Bau in Fiji. Wesleyan missionaries won him over; he was baptized Ebenezer.

Only two years before, Cakobau had participated in the ritual murder of a deceased chief's widow and had personally strangled his own mother. The Wesleyan missionaries, who had been operating in the Fiji group since the 1830s, were also enjoying some success in Tonga. By mid-century much of the island evangelization was in the hands of the Australian and New Zealand Churches, and in 1855 the Fiji and Tonga missions were placed under the Australian Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society.

A more insiduous relationship between

"Blackbirds" – Pacific islanders who were tricked or kidnapped into underpaid jobs – help work a prosperous sugar plantation in Fiji.

Australia and the islands began in the 1840s with the importing of islanders to do the heavy work on farms and plantations in New South Wales (local aborigines having proved both unsuitable and difficult to recruit). Benjamin Boyd, the owner of some 60 grazing stations, started the custom, which was eventually called "blackbirding," in 1847 with a shipment of Melanesians from the New Hebrides.

He saw nothing immoral in this, and wrote that he could not imagine "a greater benefit conferred on a race, than removing these poor benighted creatures from a state of starvation and heathen ignorance to a Christian country." His words echoed exactly those of the slave-traders whom English abolitionists had managed with difficulty to outlaw only 14 years earlier. There were rumours that the workers, theoretically hired under contract, had in fact been brought in against their own will. The British government, fearing that the practice would come perilously close to slave-trading, opposed it, and so did the New South Wales Council.

They were certain that the Melanesians had no idea of the precise nature and significance of any contract they might have agreed to; and certainly the islanders soon became disillusioned, restive and truculent. On a Saturday afternoon in October, 1847, they swarmed angrily into Sydney to seek Boyd out, streaming down the main street – a refreshing sight, one newspaper reported, as three of them were not wearing "the articles of clothing generally considered the most indispensable of male attire."

Boyd's scheme failed: the Melanesians were not good shepherds. But "blackbirding" became an unsavoury feature of Australian contact with the South-West Pacific during the second half of the 19th Century. Nearly 60,000 islanders, chiefly from the New Hebrides and the Solomons, were indentured to Queensland employers; the sugar industry was virtually erected on their labour, and they helped create the cotton industry which developed as the result of the world shortage caused by the American Civil War. Others went to Fiji and Samoa. They were usually shipped out with formal contracts for three years, but they had often been cajoled or tricked into agreeing to work in a land of which they knew nothing, for wages far lower than those of whites in similar jobs.

Recruiters sometimes invited them aboard ship, got them drunk and sailed before they were sober; occasionally they

Captain James Goodenough, though totally innocent of "blackbirding," was slain by the poison arrows of natives who associated all white men with the hated labour traffic.

didn't even bother with the drink, but lured the "blackbirds" down below and then battened down the hatches. Many of the ships were filthy and disease-ridden, and "blackbirds" died in their hundreds of dysentery and other epidemic diseases.

There were often outright kidnappings, with no pretence whatsoever of contracts; ruthless skippers even masqueraded as missionaries to win native confidence. One of these freebooters, a doctor, James Murray, abducted 161 men, many of them ferocious head-hunters, during a voyage in the Solomons. When the kidnapped islanders tried to batter their way through the hatches, the crew shot them down, killing and wounding indiscriminately. Then they threw the wounded overboard with the dead – a total of some 70. It was reported that the doctor cheerfully sang "Marching Through Georgia" in a lusty baritone during the massacre.

Such unscrupulous conduct gave the islanders good reason to detest and distrust all white men. John Coleridge Patteson, the first Bishop of Melanesia, was slaughtered in 1871 in revenge for the kidnapping of five boys from Nukapu in the Reef Islands. He was struck five times – with club, knife and arrow – one wound for each boy taken. In 1871, a naval captain, James Goodenough, Commodore of the Australian Station, was murdered in retaliation for outrages committed by "blackbirders."

In Queensland, treatment of the labourers varied from plantation to plantation. If seldom compassionate, it was at least reasonable on some estates; but on others it was brutal, and the lash was used as violently and as frequently as in the old slaving days. The death-rate was high: nearly 150 in every 1,000, in the mid-1880s. In Fiji, it tended to be even higher. Two white planters there treated their labourers so cruelly that 24 out of 31 died within a few weeks. "Blackbirds" who survived disease or maltreatment, and who were not repatriated at the end of their indenture terms, often drifted aimlessly from job to job for years.

Measures to check the abuses began in 1877 when the British appointed a High Commissioner for the Western Pacific. He was responsible for the supervision of labour recruitment in Melanesia and in Micronesia, that island-dappled sweep of sea that stretches eastward to Polynesia, and northward as far as the Philippines. South Sea island "blackbirding" ended in Queensland in the 1880s, and although revived for a time during the 1890s and early 1900s, the worst was over.

The conscience of the British government was stirred periodically by developments in the South Pacific, but it was not greatly concerned with territorial expansion and had no clear or consistent policy towards the islands' future. The Colonial Office looked on them as primarily the concern of the Australian and New Zealand colonies and believed that these should bear the cost of the expansionist programme for which the colonists were pushing. Britain participated, but permitted other nations to take the lead in what seemed the inevitable process of bringing the South Pacific peoples under alien rule in the 19th Century.

The Dutch annexed the western half of New Guinea in 1828. The French annexed the Marquesas in 1842 and established a limited protectorate over Tahiti and the Society Islands. Two years later they took control of Gambier Island in the Tuamotus and claimed a protectorate over the entire group. In 1853 France annexed New Caledonia, but since this large island is less than 1,000 miles from the east coast of Australia, its trade continued to be conducted largely through Sydney. In 1864 France annexed the Loyalty Islands.

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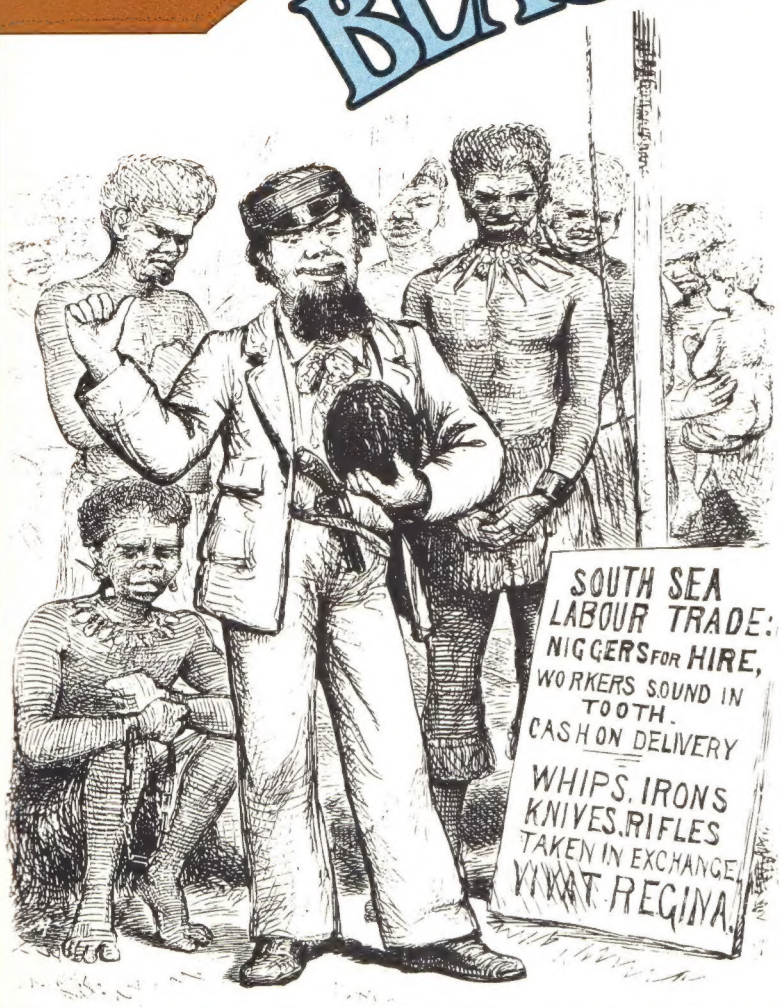
A contemporary cartoon shows Disraeli presenting Fiji to Britannia, who comments, "Useful if not beautiful." Britain annexed the islands in 1874, after numerous requests by the Fijians.

BLACKBIRDING



For early settlers in Australia and the South Sea Islands, where the work was hard, the climate difficult and the pay low, labour recruitment always posed a problem. From the 1860s, settlers tried to solve it by "blackbirding" – tricking or abducting the workers they needed, and holding them as virtual prisoners. The "blackbirders" were unscrupulous adventurers who sailed from island to island to round up labourers, sometimes bribing them to sign incomprehensible contracts of indenture; sometimes inviting them aboard ship and then battening them down below decks; sometimes simply storming into their villages and kidnapping them. Often, rebellion – like that on the *Carl*, shown below and on the right – was crushed by brutal reprisals.

Abolitionists condemned the trade in speeches, pamphlets and cartoons – like the one (left) published in Australia in 1881 – but it was not outlawed until 1904.

In a notorious massacre in 1871, the *Carl's* crew shoot into the hold to quell a mutiny begun by kidnapped Solomon Island head-hunters.

The *Carl's* seamen toss captives, still living but wounded by their shots, overboard. In all, 70 were killed outright or jettisoned.

Surviving *Carl* "blackbirds" are landed in Fiji to be sold at an average £10 per head, for work on white-owned plantations.

A missionary postcard shows the "before and after" results of Christianizing the heathen.

This French expansion worried the Australians and New Zealanders, who felt that increasing French influence was a threat to their own security. They were highly critical of the British government's apparent indifference. They themselves had a simple and direct policy: to keep foreign powers out of the South Pacific and to make as much of it as possible British. But they had no legal authority and could do no more than try to exert pressure on a cautious and often unresponsive British government.

In 1870, at a conference in Melbourne, the premiers of all the Australian colonies resolved that a British protectorate should be established over the Fiji group. Control by a foreign power, they declared, would be "prejudicial commercially" and "might be dangerous in time of war." Although the waters around Fiji were risky to navigate and its inhabitants were savage and cannibalistic, French, American and British missionaries had managed to get in and stay in.

In the 1850s British, American, Australian and New Zealand adventurers had begun to experiment with cultivating the cotton tree (quite different from the American cotton plant) which grew there naturally. As early as 1855 Cakobau, who thought of himself as the chief of all the many chiefs (he was, in fact, crowned King in 1867, and his great-grandson is now Governor-General of independent Fiji), took the advice of Wesleyan missionaries and asked to be annexed by Queen Victoria. His request was enthusiastically approved in Australia and New Zealand, but the British government rejected it, then and later.

The Australians, however, pressed consistently for annexation – and Whitehall remained consistently unmoved. For one thing, the government worried about having to maintain a military force in the islands. In 1870 Gladstone stated that Britain should not be "a party to any arrangement for adding Fiji and all that lies beyond it to the cares of this overdone and over-burdened Government and Empire." Britain would go no further than to approve a code of regulations for controlling the treatment of Polynesian labourers imported into Fiji.

There was friction between the islanders and the settlers. It was impossible to do business without adequate laws and controls, and tension built to the point where war between the races seemed imminent. In January, 1873, therefore, the British Chief Secretary in Fiji asked Britain if she would at last entertain a proposition for annexation from the Fijian government "if its King and people once more, and now through the King's responsible advisers, express a desire to place themselves under Her Majesty's rule."

The Cabinet, by then under Disraeli, appointed a two-man commission to examine the question. In April, 1874, they recommended annexation: they could "see no prospect for these islands, should Her Majesty's Government decline to accept the offer of cession, but ruin to the English planters and confusion in the native Government." Cakobau, who had formed an interim government at the commissioners' instigation, was entirely in agreement. "If matters remain as they are," he declared, "Fiji will become like a piece of drift-wood on the sea, and be picked up by the first passerby . . . the white stalkers on the beach, the cormorants, will open their maws and swallow us."

In August, Lord Carnarvon, the Colonial Secretary, telegraphed the Governor of New South Wales that he was at liberty to accept the cession of the islands if it should be unconditional or virtually unconditional, and to make arrangements for a temporary government. By October, the annexation was a fact; Sir Arthur Gordon was appointed the first Governor, and most of the British press applauded. Cakobau celebrated by sending Queen Victoria his favourite war-club. It remained in England for nearly 60 years, when it was returned to Fiji to serve as the legislative council's mace.

Lord Kimberley, who had been Gladstone's Colonial Secretary, admitted that it would have been difficult to refuse to take Fiji in 1874, but he found it curious, "that John Bull is not cured of earth hunger by this time." Kimberley feared that Fiji's annexation would be a spur to the Australian colonists who were already agitating for further imperial expansion in the Pacific – especially to those who had their eyes on New Guinea, only 100 miles across the Torres Strait from the northern reaches of the Australian mainland. His fear was soon justified.

British association with New Guinea can be traced back to Dampier, Cook and the other early voyagers who had skirted its shores; but very little was yet known of the forests and tropical grasslands of the interior. Sir William Macleay, who led an expedition to the south coast in 1875, advocated annexation in the interests of exploration and scientific study, despite the unhealthy climate, the seeming impenetrability of the interior, and the probability of encountering violent native resistance.

The western half of the island belonged to the Netherlands, but the remainder

belonged to its native cannibals. Britain's involvement had been informal and spasmodic. The Union Jack had been hoisted there as early as 1847, when a naval lieutenant named Yule, sailing in H.M.S. *Bramble*, landed at Cape Possession in the Gulf of Papua; but the British government refused to ratify his claim.

When a group of Sydney businessmen formed the New Guinea Company in June, 1867, for the purpose of colonization, neither the British nor the New South Wales government would give them any help. For the next few years it was a free-for-all for those drawn across the Torres Strait to fish for plants and for bêche-de-mer or sea-cucumber, an edible slug for which there was an eager market in China. In 1871 the New Guinea Prospecting Association set itself up in business and bought a brig so decrepit that the captain they first chose prudently declined the command.

Nevertheless, nearly 70 people sailed aboard her from Sydney early in 1872, and for three weeks coasted northwards until fresh winds ripped down masts and boisterous seas crippled the tiller and rudder and smashed some of the bulwarks. They tried to make their way to a Queensland port through the jagged Barrier Reef, but ended up on the coral. Only a few survived.

Soon after, Captain John Moresby discovered a fine landlocked harbour on the south coast. He named it after "my father, the venerable admiral of the fleet," and in 1874 took possession of the entire eastern portion of the island pending confirmation from London. But none of the Australian colonies was prepared to share in the administration costs, and the British government could see no reason why taxpayers at home should be saddled with them.

Nevertheless, agitation in Australia for annexation attracted a strong and articulate following. Missionaries, who had been among the earliest settlers, as far back as the 1860s, and were by now established at Port Moresby and in outstations along the south coast, joined the vociferous chorus. The waters thereabouts were becoming an international grab-bag, and they much preferred the prospect of British jurisdiction to the other possibilities – German, Italian, Russian or American.

The London Missionary Society established its first station at Port Moresby in the mid-1870s, and the New Guinea missions, like those in the rest of the Pacific, were remarkably successful. Their massive conversions may have been helped along by the fact that the islanders, impressed by the obvious prosperity of the traders and other Europeans whom they saw, concluded that Christianity and affluence were two sides of the same coin.

One of New Guinea's bravest missionary explorers was the Reverend James Chalmers, who went to Port Moresby in 1877 and spent the remainder of the century energetically extending the line of stations along the island's south coast and into isolated villages of cannibalistic tribes. He usually set off on his expeditions with native converts only, and no European assistants. In 1901, he confidently tried to make friends with head-hunting cannibals on Goapibari Island, in the Gulf of Papua, who had never seen a white man before. Their reaction to the strange sight was violent. They forced Chalmers and his companions into a grass house decorated with skulls, and beat them to death. Then they be-

New Guinea missionaries, who arrived a decade before British administration began, trained natives (show here with them) as assistants.

The Rev. James Chalmers ventured into unexplored areas to evangelize until he was battered to death in 1901 by Papuan cannibals who had never before seen a white man.

headed them, dismembered them, cooked and ate them.

But missionary matters were of only marginal interest to Australia. Her real concern was twofold: that the extension of foreign influence in the Pacific threatened the colonies' security; and that New Guinea's mineral potential was too great a treasure to let fall into alien hands. The centre of agitation was in Sydney, where the cause was trumpeted by two politicians, Mr. (later Sir Henry) Parkes and Sir John Robertson, and by a fiery Presbyterian minister, Dr. John Dunmore Lang, who had been a provisional director of the New Guinea Company.

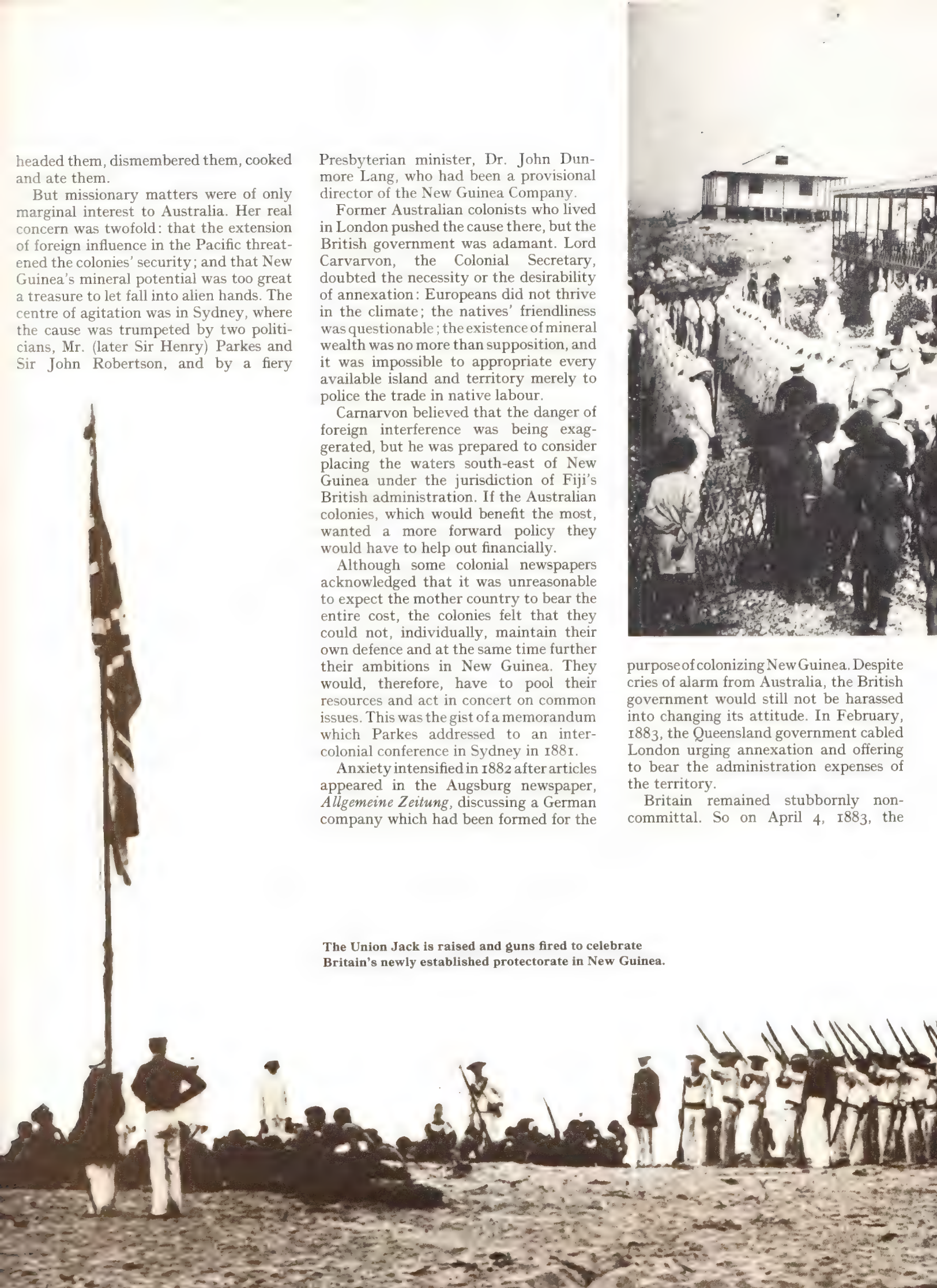
Former Australian colonists who lived in London pushed the cause there, but the British government was adamant. Lord Carvarvon, the Colonial Secretary, doubted the necessity or the desirability of annexation: Europeans did not thrive in the climate; the natives' friendliness was questionable; the existence of mineral wealth was no more than supposition, and it was impossible to appropriate every available island and territory merely to police the trade in native labour.

Carnarvon believed that the danger of foreign interference was being exaggerated, but he was prepared to consider placing the waters south-east of New Guinea under the jurisdiction of Fiji's British administration. If the Australian colonies, which would benefit the most, wanted a more forward policy they would have to help out financially.

Although some colonial newspapers acknowledged that it was unreasonable to expect the mother country to bear the entire cost, the colonies felt that they could not, individually, maintain their own defence and at the same time further their ambitions in New Guinea. They would, therefore, have to pool their resources and act in concert on common issues. This was the gist of a memorandum which Parkes addressed to an inter-colonial conference in Sydney in 1881.

Anxiety intensified in 1882 after articles appeared in the Augsburg newspaper, *Allgemeine Zeitung*, discussing a German company which had been formed for the purpose of colonizing New Guinea. Despite cries of alarm from Australia, the British government would still not be harassed into changing its attitude. In February, 1883, the Queensland government cabled London urging annexation and offering to bear the administration expenses of the territory.

Britain remained stubbornly non-committal. So on April 4, 1883, the



The Union Jack is raised and guns fired to celebrate Britain's newly established protectorate in New Guinea.

The British at last annex south-east New Guinea in 1884, after years of pressure by Australians, who, the previous year, had taken unofficial "possession" of the area.

Queensland Premier, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, took action on his own. He ordered a magistrate on Thursday Island, just off the northern tip of Australia in the Torres Strait, to take possession in the Queen's name of "all that part of New Guinea and the islands adjacent thereto, between the 141st and 155th meridians of east longitude."

Britain could not condone Queensland's unconstitutional move. "It is well understood," wrote Lord Derby, now Colonial Secretary under the re-elected Gladstone, "that the officers of a Colonial Government have no power or authority to act beyond the limits of their Colony, and, if this constitutional principle is not carefully observed serious difficulties and complications must arise."

Not only did Britain doubt that Germany was genuinely interested in New Guinea, but she was disinclined to risk a war in order to take over a people who had evinced no desire for British rule. She was already beset by troubles enough in Ireland, the Sudan, South Africa, the Balkans and Afghanistan; and friendly relations with Germany were important at a time when France was showing herself resentful over Britain's growing influence in Egypt. Derby made it clear that Britain would do nothing more about New Guinea unless there were financial and administrative support from all the Australian colonies.

Consequently, when delegates from the colonies met in Sydney at the end of 1883, they discussed both the New Guinea problem and the question of their own federation. They decided unanimously that it was essential to take that part of New Guinea which was not held by the Netherlands. The Premier of Victoria, James Service, also proposed the annexation of the Solomons, the New Hebrides, and other Pacific islands.

His proposals helped to aggravate the anxiety felt by German merchants about competition in the Pacific at a time when Bismarck's Germany was busily acquiring an empire of her own.

Germany established herself in the Cameroons and South-West Africa in July and August, 1884, and intimated to the British government that she was interested in the northern side of New Guinea. Britain at last established a New Guinea protectorate in November, but, reluctant to incur German displeasure, limited it to the south-east of the island.

AUSTRALIA'S "ISLE OF WIGHT"

Pressured for years by Australian colonists, Britain at last established a protectorate over south-east New Guinea (later named Papua) in 1884. Germany was already interested in the north-east portion, and Australians dreaded foreign control on the near-by island which Queensland's Premier, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, called "Australia's Isle of Wight," and which was rumoured to be rich in gold. In 1885, an eminent naturalist, Henry O. Forbes, in a journey illustrated in these and the following pages, set out to learn what Britain had taken on.

The Scottish naturalist and explorer Henry O. Forbes (in topee) surveys the region near the Astrolabe Mountains.

Tribesmen parade on the shore as the S.S. *Governor Blackall*, bearing Britain's first High Commissioner for New Guinea, drops anchor in 1885.

The villagers of Hanuabada, near Port Moresby, greet Forbes and his party with curiosity. Further inland, the reaction was to prove less friendly.

Challenging the Gods

In 1886, when New Guinea's mysteries were still unplumbed, the British Commissioner, the Hon. J. Douglas, warned explorers against identifying the part with the whole. To characterize the world's second largest island at one stroke, he said, was like lumping together the Highlanders of Scotland and the people of Kent. Contrasts abound. The landscape varies from swamp, plain and forest to soaring mountain peaks. The islanders themselves also vary – from copper brown to sooty black, from potters and traders to fishermen and warriors.

Most, as Henry Forbes observed, responded to a "chuck under the chin, their sign of friendship," and they gladly served as bearers in exchange for red cloth, beads and tobacco. But they were reluctant to lead his party to the 13,000-foot summit of Mount Owen Stanley, warning him that the gods would "tear off your nails, pull out your joints, eat your fingers, cut off your ears, pluck out your eyes and cut off your head."

The few who did agree to guide the expedition fled in terror before the top was reached, leaving Forbes and his companions to work their way painfully back down the craggy mountain to the base camp. In their absence the camp had been attacked by hostile natives and all their food and equipment was gone. Forced to abandon any further attempt on the mountain, the expedition made a perilous withdrawal to the coast.

Primitive structures of bamboo and thatch provide shelter for 19th-Century native fishermen.

Tupuselei, a Papuan Venice, rises from the sea on piles. Its people, who commuted to the mainland by canoe, were expert farmers.

In Moapa the houses were carefully designed to face each other in regular streets. Less attention, however, was paid to clothing.

Pots, Pigs and Paradise Plumes

Early explorers recorded in awed detail the complex and varied life-styles of New Guinea's inventive peoples. The photographer, J.W.Lindt, who travelled with Forbes and took the pictures which illustrate this essay, wrote of a tribe "skilled in pottery manufacture" who traded their wares from boats with "sails shaped like the claws of a crab." He described warriors who "wore cassowary feathers to impress"; girls who decorated their "frizzy hair with pink shells and Venetian glass beads brought by traders"; and feasts of roasted kangaroo rats.

In one village he saw dogs who scrambled up the ladders to the raised huts "with the ease and agility of monkeys"; in another, a "chief tattooed with more than 30 crosses, each representing a life taken," and in a third a platform heaped with the items of a bride's dowry: "earthenware pots, wooden weapons, birds of paradise plumes, yams, bananas and two wild pigs."

Forbes and Lindt were not the first Europeans to see all this: missionaries had established an isolated outpost at Aroma, near Port Moresby, almost a decade before British administration began.

Their efforts won much admiration. "For years," wrote Forbes approvingly, "the mission station has been placed at the disposal of all-comers as a resthouse, where Mrs. Lawes [the wife of one of the missionaries] dispensed, out of their often enough scanty stores . . . with abounding generosity, the warmest-hearted hospitality; and to her tender care and nursing not a few visitors owe it that they have left [the island's] shores alive."

Women load *lakatois* – sailing canoes – wi pottery cooking utensils and water jugs which are traded for sago and other foods grown by agricultural tribes.

Europeans found that religious customs varied from tribe to tribe. Some placed the bodies of their dead in platforms, like the one above. Others (right) built charnel-houses over them, and the bereaved sat outside to mourn as the women here are doing.

In Sadara Makara, described by early visitors as a "friendly village," unmarried girls cluster beneath their tree houses which teeter dangerously some 40 feet above ground.

Converted natives gather at the mission house in Aroma, New Guinea. Those in European clothing are advanced enough to help convert others.

II. The Making of Island Nations

The Australian colonies welcomed the establishment of a British protectorate in south-eastern New Guinea, but were incensed when, before the year's end, Germany acquired the north-eastern section. "We protest," cried the Victoria government, "in the name of the present and future of Australia." But to no avail. The following year, a declaration signed in Berlin confirmed the Germans and the British in their respective spheres in New Guinea.

The Australians were further annoyed by Britain's lack of concern over the New Hebrides, to which they attached great economic and strategic significance. They disliked having the French in New Caledonia, where they had set up a penal colony, and there were signs that France might establish another in the New Hebrides. Escaped convicts from New Caledonia had already proved troublesome to the Australians; they wanted no more from the new colony.

Both France and England were more concerned with problems elsewhere in the world, and they settled their differences amicably in the New Hebrides in 1887 by establishing a joint naval commission to supervise the interests of their respective nationals. This was the forerunner of the Anglo-French condominium that exists today. During the same period, Britain, reacting both to pressure from Australia and New Zealand and to the growing involvement of other powers – most ominously, Germany – in the South Pacific, began to reach out more positively.

New Zealanders were gratified in 1888 when Britain established a protectorate over the Cook Islands – and even more so in 1900 when the islands' administration was transferred to them. By then Britain had also proclaimed protectorates over the Phoenix and Tokelau Islands, the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, and Tonga. By the early 20th Century most of the islands in the South Pacific were under European control. Australia and New Zealand were both intimately involved. In 1906 the British territory in south-east New Guinea became an Australian dependency, and was given its present name, Papua. After the First World War, German-held north-east New Guinea and the neighbouring islands were mandated to Australia, and German territory in Western Samoa was mandated to New Zealand.

Administering the islands within the orbit of Australia and New Zealand posed a variety of problems. Europeans wished to exploit local resources, but they realized that they must at the same time protect the interests of the indigenous inhabitants on whom they counted for labour. This dilemma was given an added dimension when Asians were brought in to help swell work forces. Although there was never any accurate census of the indigenes, it was commonly assumed that island populations were declining and would continue to do so. Thus, in Fiji, it was Indians imported under indenture who laid the foundations for the domination of the sugar industry by Australia's Colonial Sugar Refining Company.

Imperial authorities also recognized that it was their responsibility to prevent the spread of disease and to eliminate native superstitions and taboos. In no case was the handing back of sovereignty seriously envisaged; it was felt that the native peoples would require Western protection and tutelage for many generations – perhaps for ever.

The theory of indirect rule associated with British colonial administration was applied in most of the Pacific island territories. This policy was best exemplified and expressed by Lord Lugard, at the turn of the century, when he was the first High Commissioner in Northern Nigeria. Reduced to its simplest terms, it provided for native laws and customs to continue, if they were humane; for the local ruler to remain in power with a regular pay-cheque from the British government, and for an equitable tax system. It did not anticipate parliamentary democracy.

Sir Arthur Gordon, Fiji's first Governor, had earlier introduced so successful a form of indirect rule there, using the chiefs effectively and staffing the government in large measure by Fijians, that he won affectionate admiration. When he left, the chiefs asked Queen Victoria for permission to present him with two small islands so that "it may be known that it was he who established the working of good and suitable government in our land, which has brought us prosperity, rest and peace."

Sir William MacGregor, Chief Medical Officer in Fiji under Gordon, transplanted the techniques to south-east New Guinea when he became administrator in 1888. He organized a native constabulary which was eventually recruited from among the local inhabitants; his village constables were usually the most aggressive members of the community – sometimes even notorious murderers. But MacGregor believed that any man who could murder under savage conditions and escape the wrath of injured kinsmen had exactly those qualities of determination, foresight and energy which, if rightly directed, could make him both a reputable member of society and an instrument of native regeneration. This was possible, of course, within the context of a community where killing was not regarded as a heinous crime but as a sign of valour, and where a murderer could be basking in the admiration of his own kith and kin when the colonial police arrived to arrest him.

MacGregor also encouraged the missionary societies, granting them land cheaply and helping them to expand into areas as yet unpenetrated. It was a quid pro quo arrangement, for the missionaries, by spreading education, inculcating concepts of Western justice, establishing medical care and eradicating barbarous native customs, helped to oil the wheels of colonial government. They participated directly in community life, while government administrators were seldom more than nomadic visitors.

MacGregor was not at all interested in the missionaries' denominational differences, but deeply concerned with the practical matter of their assisting his administration. "To me in my official capacity," he said, "all Christian churches are exactly alike, and that which does the best work will be most appreciated." He removed the danger of obstructive sectarian competition by promoting a tripartite conference in 1890 of the Anglican Board of Missions, the Wesleyan Conference and the London Missionary Society, who agreed among themselves on three spheres of influence.

Since the missionaries were seeing to education in the islands, colonial governments themselves hung back. In Fiji, for example, the Methodists and Roman Catholics had been teaching since before

the middle of the 19th Century. But much of the education was erratic and uncoordinated, with the teachers all too often unqualified Europeans and semi-literate natives. Learning seldom went beyond the elementary stage, and the content bore little or no relationship to the life the pupil was going to lead.

When government schools began to be opened later in the 19th Century and in the 20th, the missions' role gradually declined. In Fiji and the Cook Islands academic standards were linked increasingly to the New Zealand system, and Cook Islands' pupils occasionally went on to a Maori secondary school in New Zealand. In Papua and New Guinea schooling was geared to the Australian pattern, but the government budgeted meagrely from the start, and the money allotted in New Guinea, particularly, diminished to pathetic proportions. By 1940 educational progress there was probably the slowest of any European-controlled territory in the world. This was a relief – not a source of shame – to influential sections of the white population who feared that too much education would discourage native labour from doing heavy work at low wages.

A major obstacle to any unified learning system in New Guinea was the multiplicity of languages. The Australian government made little attempt to cope, not even studying the policies pursued by Western administrations in other multilingual backward countries. As a result, from the end of the 19th Century, pidgin English burgeoned as the only common tongue among the various peoples. Their *lingua franca* was related both to a pidgin used earlier in the South Seas and to one that was developed in the mid-19th Century by indentured Melanesian labourers on Queensland plantations.

Pidgin, employing a restricted vocabulary and a grammatical system quite unlike that of standard English, is a simplified language derived in part from the natives' faulty imitation of English sounds they heard, and in part from the deliberate attempt of English speakers to imitate the accent and style of the natives. Thus the languages of both converged into a mutually comprehensible hybrid. The Australian government regarded pidgin as indispensable

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New Zealand Premier Richard Seddon meets King Togia, a Cook Islands chief, in 1900 shortly before the group came under N.Z. rule.

R.L.S. in Samoa

Nine years after Robert Louis Stevenson had undertaken his imagined adventuring in *Treasure Island* in 1881, he found his own real-life island in the South Seas. He settled in Samoa after years of searching for a gentle climate to help ease his tuberculosis, and never returned to his chill native Scotland. Although his racking cough abated under the Samoan sun, he lived for only four years. But they were rich. The islanders welcomed him as an unofficial chieftain and called him "Tusitala", teller of tales. When he died, they carried his body on their shoulders high up a steep mountain trail to the site he had chosen, thus fulfilling his wish:
Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie.

R.L.S. (centre), his wife (beside him), his mother (profile), his stepchildren and their families all were involved in the Samoan life the author came to understand so sympathetically and to love so well.

Stevenson with his wife (pointing) made his first Pacific voyage aboard the yacht, *Casco*. The cruise, which lasted for months, whetted his taste for the South Seas and led to his making his last home in Samoa.

Mrs. Stevenson (an American divorcee, whom Stevenson married in 1880) attends a feast with Samoans, who accepted her as warmly as they did her husband.

The author built this home – "Vailima", five rivers – on a 400-acre estate. Here Samoans brought him their problems, and he helped settle many political differences.

for understanding between the New Guinea peoples and the administrators.

A long debate which began in 1945 on the pros and cons of pidgin has still not ended, although a United Nations trusteeship mission which visited New Guinea in 1953 concluded that the language was unsuitable for instruction and recommended that it be discarded. Its characteristics, according to the U.N. committee's report, reflected "outmoded concepts of the relationship between indigenous inhabitants and immigrant groups." Strangely, despite the fact that pidgin undoubtedly reflects a master-servant relationship, the indigenous population increasingly developed a national pride in it.

Although at first the missions also relieved the civil authorities of much of the responsibility for medical care, in the final analysis it was only through sustained governmental interest and expenditure that the challenge of caring for native health could be properly met. Administrators were given a strong financial boost after the First World War, by the Rockefeller Foundation, which promoted public health activity in Papua, the Solomons and Fiji and encouraged medical co-operation among the islands.

A central medical school that was opened at Suva, the capital of the Fijis, in 1928, attracted students from many other parts of the Pacific, and a leprosy hospital there also served a number of British and New Zealand territories. New Guinea ultimately provided a fair example of how to care for public health in an exceedingly backward community. Each district was provided with a hospital, a medical officer and assistants, and patrols which, acting sometimes in conjunction with administrative patrols, carry hygiene instruction and medical aid to villages remote from the hospitals.

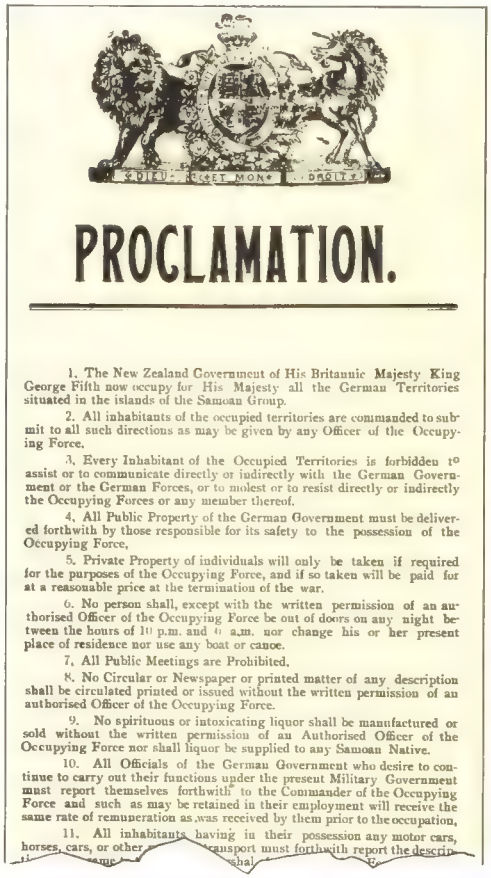
All the economies of the islands within the Australian orbit were small and agricultural, and industrial development was slow. Everywhere, economic exploitation was under the control of foreign interests and generally dependent on foreign private enterprise. The chief outlets for exports were in New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom.

In the New Guinea territories, profitable gold-mining, started in the 1920s, developed increasingly. When miners first penetrated dense bush and jungle to dig in the almost inaccessible mountains and valleys of the gold-bearing districts, their food and supplies had to be manhandled from the port of Salamaua by native bearers – an arduous ten-day trek. Later, travel to and from the gold-fields was provided by an adventurous plane service which eliminated the gruelling land journey, but opened up the hazard of a forced landing and the possibility of becoming a fortuitous meal for cannibals.

Britons, Australians and New Zealanders all regarded political independence in the islands as distant, perhaps even unattainable. And nowhere before the Second World War was it the objective of any significant political movement by the islanders themselves. There were, however, faint stirrings in Samoa as early as the 1920s when the Mau, a nationalist organization modelled on the Indian National Congress and dedicated to "Samoa mo Samoa" – "Samoa for the Samoans" – launched a non-co-operation campaign stressing the vital need to preserve native customs.

The Mau was organized by an élite group of politically orientated Samoans, among the most important of whom was a locally born businessman, O.F. Nelson, the son of a Swedish trader and a Samoan woman. The entrepreneur of a successful chain of trading stores, Nelson was an excellent organizer and no mean orator. But Samoa, like the rest of the Pacific, was not yet ready for political awakening. It took the years of strife between 1941 and 1945 to bring that about. Even then, the drive for autonomy was as much superimposed as self-generated.

Military operations throughout the Pacific necessitated the construction of



PROCLAMATION.

1. The New Zealand Government of His Britannic Majesty King George Fifth now occupy for His Majesty all the German Territories situated in the islands of the Samoan Group.

2. All inhabitants of the occupied territories are commanded to submit to all such directions as may be given by any Officer of the Occupying Force.

3. Every Inhabitant of the Occupied Territories is forbidden to assist or to communicate directly or indirectly with the German Government or the German Forces, or to molest or to resist directly or indirectly the Occupying Forces or any member thereof.

4. All Public Property of the German Government must be delivered forthwith by those responsible for its safety to the possession of the Occupying Force.

5. Private Property of individuals will only be taken if required for the purposes of the Occupying Force, and if so taken will be paid for at a reasonable price at the termination of the war.

6. No person shall, except with the written permission of an authorised Officer of the Occupying Force be out of doors on any night between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. nor change his or her present place of residence nor use any boat or canoe.

7. All Public Meetings are Prohibited.

8. No Circular or Newspaper or printed matter of any description shall be circulated printed or issued without the written permission of an authorised Officer of the Occupying Force.

9. No spirituous or intoxicating liquor shall be manufactured or sold without the written permission of an Authorised Officer of the Occupying Force nor shall liquor be supplied to any Samoan Native.

10. All Officials of the German Government who desire to continue to carry out their functions under the present Military Government must report themselves forthwith to the Commander of the Occupying Force and such as may be retained in their employment will receive the same rate of remuneration as was received by them prior to the occupation.

11. All inhabitants having in their possession any motor cars, horses, cars, or other [illegible] transport must forthwith report the descrip-

A New Zealand officer reads the British First World War proclamation (above) taking over German territories in Samoa.

The late Queen Salote of Tonga rides in state to the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

roads, bridges and airfields, making accessible districts which might otherwise have been left isolated indefinitely. These brought the local populations into sharp focus; for the first time their needs and desires were apparent, and providing for them became an urgent matter of conscience. As early as August, 1943, the Australian government proclaimed the welfare of the New Guinea natives to be one of the Commonwealth's imperative concerns when peace came.

In January, 1944, Australia and New Zealand gave firm proof of their newfound sense of responsibility. They signed an agreement in Canberra which declared that the two countries would "act together in matters of common concern in the South-west and South Pacific areas." Not only would they themselves collaborate in promoting social welfare and material development, but they recommended establishing a regional advisory organization which would include British, American, and French representatives.

The commission's function would be to evolve a common policy on social, economic and political development and to recommend arrangements "for the participation of natives in administration in increasing measure, with a view to promoting the ultimate attainment of self-government in the form most suited to the circumstances of the native peoples concerned." The proposed organization was established in 1947 as the South Pacific Commission with its headquarters at Noumea, the capital of New Caledonia.

Education was seen as of prime importance, the logical corollary to native advancement in political status. The administering parties also recognized that, as local participation in government and administration increased, whites would be displaced at the centres of authority. The attention given during the post-war period by the United Nations and its trusteeship council to the dwindling number of colonial and trust territories proved both a spur in the South Pacific and a source of irritation; for the nations involved resented what they regarded as often misinformed and prejudiced criticism.

Australia certainly felt that, so far as Papua–New Guinea was concerned, international criticism took inadequate account of the difficulties with which the administration had to deal: the exceedingly backward society, the abundance of languages, the dissimilarity of racial types, the absence of a widespread common religious belief, and a forbidding interior dominated by jungle, mountains, swamps and torrential rivers.

"The world would be acting in ignorance," declared the Australian Minister for Territories in 1960, "if it did not appreciate the primitive and unique character of the conditions of the territories and the size of the basic civilizing tasks to be completed." Nevertheless, by the 1960s both Australia and New Zealand had been persuaded that granting self-government to dependent territories was preferable to risking the bitterness that could arise from undue delays.

Steady political advance brought Papua–New Guinea in the early 1970s to the threshold of an independence expected to be formally granted by the middle of the decade. The decolonizing process was faster in Western Samoa and the Cook Islands. Western Samoa became the first independent state of Polynesia in January, 1962, to the sounds of church bells and a tropical rainstorm.

The Cook Islands achieved self-government in 1965. In both cases, special ties were retained with New Zealand, which recognized a continuing responsibility to provide technical, educational, administrative and other assistance. In a friendship treaty, New Zealand expressly promised to aid Western Samoa in the conduct of external affairs without prejudicing the tiny state's right to formulate her own foreign policy. One result is that New Zealand represents Western Samoa at international conferences and provides diplomatic protection for her nationals overseas.

In Fiji, where the indigenous inhabi-

tants are now outnumbered by the imported Indians and their descendants, political progress was complicated by the problems inherent in a plural society; but after experimentation with complex voting and constitutional formulas, independence was ultimately acquired in 1970.

Despite political progress, New Guinea and the Pacific islands retain many of the characteristics of colonies and remain very much within the orbit of Australia and New Zealand. Only Fiji has an economic capacity that promises more than a mere subsistence level; and there may also be potential in New Guinea. For the time being, all the economies are agricultural and all depend on grants from the administering, or lately administering, powers.

Such industrial development as there may be in the future is likely to remain in alien hands. The intense interest of Australia and New Zealand in the territories of the South and South-West Pacific which motivated them in the 19th Century to press Britain into extending her imperial authority has not ended with the virtual completion of the decolonization process in the 20th Century. As a former New Zealand High Commissioner for Western Samoa, Sir Guy Powles, frankly put it in 1969: "We are responsible for the creation of independent, economically non-viable states, so we have a long-run responsibility to support their economically non-viable independence"

Western Samoans, led by a conductor in the "Freedom Flag," stage a historical tableau during the 1962 independence celebrations.

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